



Together We Can Prevent Gender-based Gun Violence!

During the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, violence against women and LGBT persons has been increasing. Isolation, anxiety, and economic insecurity can be factors associated with increased control and violence within the home. **In cases of domestic violence the presence of a gun increases the likelihood of homicide five-fold.** Maybe you have seen worrying trends in your surroundings? Your actions are important right now because now we must create a safer society together. Everyone has responsibility!*

Here are suggestions on what you can do right now:

Inform yourself about gendered patterns linking the pandemic and guns to violence.

Crises causes stress. We can feel trapped, powerless, and anxious. Many are afraid of getting sick or that their family members will be affected. When those feelings lead to abuse we must stand up against this unacceptable behaviour. The current situation challenges traditional masculine norms about control, provision and risk taking. This can lead to men asserting more dominance and control over their partners and children. These norms often equate masculinity with the use of guns; this can be deadly for women. Guns can also be used to inflict severe emotional abuse without ever being fired. Right now, quarantines can make it even harder to leave an abusive relationship or seek help.

Lately, domestic abuse hotlines all over the world have seen increases in calls. While most victims of gun related intimate partner violence are women with male partners, this abuse affects people of all genders and sexual orientations. Non-conforming individuals often face gun related violence for not conforming to traditional gendered roles. Inform others about this issue and learn more about gun related violence against women, LGBT* persons and children here:

- https://www.wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/WILPF_Submission_Firearms_Human_Rights_Feb2019.pdf
- https://www.wilpf.org/wilpf_statements/civilian-possession-of-firearms-and-its-impact-on-womens-human-rights/
- <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/?orangeurhood>
- <https://everytownresearch.org/reports/guns-intimate-partner-violence/>
- https://controlarms.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/GBV-practical-guide_ONLINE.pdf

Start a conversation with someone that is at risk of harming others

Do you know someone that is at risk of using violent behaviour? Men and boys particularly could need to talk about things that are difficult right now but may be hesitant to reach out. If you are worried that someone in your community might act violently you can try to have a conversation or refer them to a crisis centre.

Pay attention to signals and signs of violence

Health care systems are being pushed to their limits. Often these are the first point of contact for victims of domestic violence. This means we need to take even more responsibility within our communities. Dare to check up on someone if you are worried that they are experiencing violence or abuse in their home. Use virtual communication tools and reach out and if you suspect violence, you can offer your support. Perhaps, you could assist with calling a domestic abuse hotline. Look for your national domestic abuse hotline or an international organization like [UN Women](#) for Referral.

Store Firearms Securely and Away from Ammunition

If you or someone you know possesses a firearm, ensure that it is locked and separate from any ammunition. While the most effective way to prevent gun violence in the home is to remove the gun, keeping them securely stored and separate from ammunition can mean the difference between life and death.

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Here are some suggestions on what we can do in the long term:

The Covid-19 pandemic has reshaped our world; and in addition to the great crisis it has presented it has also shown us that we can and must act quickly to address the immense problems we face. Together, we must eradicate gender-based violence now! Some suggestions of how we can get there:

Individuals

- Speak out against the toxic masculinities that undergird gender-based gun violence
- Question the status quo in your community: Who has access to guns, when, where and why?
- Connect with local or global networks against gun violence, such as the International Network on Small Arms and Light Weapons: <https://www.iansa.org/>

Governments

- Synergize domestic violence and gun control policies to ensure the safety of all citizens
- Stop exporting arms to countries with systematic oppression of women and LGBT* persons and/or with high risk of arms related GBV
- Stop exporting arms to countries with a high risk of diversion
- Ensure equal representation of women and LGBT* in governmental bodies, including those that create policy on gun violence and arms control

Civil society

- Mainstream gendered perspectives into all of your work, including disarmament and peacebuilding
- Use your platform to elevate voices of survivors of gender-based gun violence
- Ensure that your organisations includes voices of women and LGBT* persons at all levels, especially in your leadership